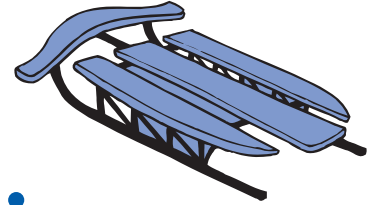




Children and Family Services
Training Center
Department of Social Work
University of North Dakota

Fostering Communications



Fall 2006

Building a Network of People in the Foster Care System

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Carrol and Darlene Burchinal named Foster Parents of the Year

By Del Hager, Darlene Hill and Deb Petry

Carrol and Darlene Burchinal's involvement in the foster care program far exceeds opening their home to youth in need of temporary foster care. Their commitment to children in foster care is also proven in the many ways that they volunteer for the "extra" projects related to improving the state foster care system.

They have served as foster parents in Burleigh County since 1974 and have had between 200-250 youth placed in their home. They have lost count. Now, in their 33rd year of fostering youth from across North Dakota, they are licensed for pre-school children and currently foster an infant. They stay closely connected to other foster youth who were once in their home but are now adults with families of their own.

Over the years, both Carrol and Darlene have held numerous positions on the Region 7 Foster Parent Association (FPA) and the North Dakota FPA. Darlene has been President of Region 7 more than once and probably held all the offices within the organization. Carrol has also served in a number of positions in this association. At the state level, they have been President, Secretary, Membership Chair and served on the Executive Board. Currently, Carrol is on the Auditing Board. They have attended nearly every NDFPA Conference and many National FPA Conferences.

In the mid 80's, Carrol was on a Foster Care Task Force that was organized by the Children and Family Services Division of the North Dakota Department of Human Services. His leadership ability and talents were instrumental in securing policy changes that improved the program for fellow foster parents. He continues to advocate within the State system informally lobbying for a variety of issues to enhance services to foster families.

They both have been foster parent trainers for many

years. In 1996, Carrol became the first foster parent PRIDE trainer in North Dakota. He attended training in Kansas City, MO, as a representative of North Dakota when we were first implementing the PRIDE Model of practice. He assisted with the first PRIDE training sessions held in our state and was on the training team for the first PRIDE Training of Trainers in North Dakota.

Recently, Carrol worked on a two-year project to develop a Foster Parent Handbook. The manual was developed for use in foster parents day-to-day life with the foster children in their care. It gives practical information to foster parents as well as information on state policies related to foster parenting. He was an invaluable member of this workgroup. He read, and reread, draft manual chapters while offering suggestions that could best assist new and seasoned foster parents. His personal experiences as a foster parent helped guide the workgroup in preparing a handbook that would not only be informative but useful to foster parents in finding answers to common questions related to foster parenting. The hours of writing this handbook were long and often grueling. Carrol willingly gave his time and energy in producing a product that North Dakota can be proud of.

For 33 years Carrol and Darlene Burchinal have made fostering a life style. Over those years many children, families and social workers have benefited from their involvement. We thank them for their years of service and the work they have done for all of us.

Information for this article was submitted to the North Dakota FPA by Del Hager, University of North Dakota, Children and Family Services Training Center, Darlene Hill, Burleigh County Social Services, and, Deb Petry, Administrator, Children & Family Services Division, DHS.)

President's Corner

By James Schnabel



It's hard to believe that another year has come and gone for the NDFPA. We had a great annual conference and it was a lot of fun connecting with old friends and meeting new ones. It was nice to have Eric Barnosky, Region 8 Advisor to the National Foster Parent Association attend the conference. Eric is from Montana.

Thanksgiving reminds me of how thankful I am for the fellow foster parents I have in the great state of North Dakota, those who are willing to sacrifice and give of their time for children. I am also very thankful for those foster parents who are willing to serve on the state board and carry out the duties that go along with that. We welcome Jill Sherbrooke, our new treasurer, to the board and are very thankful for the many talents she brings to the table.

We will be announcing our website probably in January and we are hoping we can form some type of a mentoring system. This past month my wife Pam and I experienced some interesting challenges in dealing with children and we are very thankful for the mentors we had to lend an ear and give some words of experience. It heightened my awareness for some type of mentoring program.

The Chief Justice's task force has finished it's business and the report will be out soon. Any NDFPA member interested in the report can contact me and I will get it to you. It was a privilege to serve on this task force and very insightful to me.

We have a legislative session coming up in January and we as foster parents need to be proactive by contacting our legislators regarding foster care issues. It is with our collective voices that we can make a difference for children.

As always, feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you might have and I'll do my best to get the answers for you. Next year's conference will be held in Mandan at the Seven Seas on the first weekend of October. Hope to see you all there.

Wishing you all a great holiday season.



Above - l to r: NDFPA Program Committee members Bobbi Geiger, Donna Beaulac, Janine Thull and Jeff Richter enjoy a moment of laughter.



President James Schnabel presents Jody Clauson, of UND- Children & Family Services Training Center with a rose.



Tara Muhlhouser, CFS-DHS Deputy Director and Administrator of Child Protection Services, presents the Keynote Address.



l to r: Rich Holm, PATH President; Paul Ronningen, Director of the Children & Family Services Division of the Department of Human Services; Bobbi Geiger, PATH Assistant Director of Operations; Don Snyder, Administrator of Foster Care, CFS-DHS; and, Bill Metcalfe, Director, PATH of ND.

(Photos by Patti Solinger)

Pembina County Youth Receives Scholarships at NDFPA

The recipient of the North Dakota Foster Parent Association Scholarship of \$600 and the Ruth Meier's Scholarship of \$500 is planning a career in Physical Therapy while pursuing her education at North Dakota State University. Laura Helgeson has been part of Pembina County Social Services since October, 2004, writes Jennifer Polly, her social worker. Jennifer provided the following tribute to Laura: "Since she has been in foster care, we have watched her grow into a beautiful, young woman and now she is heading off to college and we hope to continue to watch her grow. Laura has been resilient all through her time in foster care and with all the losses she has endured, she still keeps a positive attitude on life with friends and as part of her foster family. Last summer Laura received the "Eagle Award" at the Children and Family Services Conference. She was nominated by Pembina County and her foster family. She has worked with Independent Living on her future needs. Laura is also a leader in the school setting. She volunteered as a statistician for boy's wrestling, played a part in the school play, was part of the SADD organization, and helped with the Teen Challenge Conference this Spring." Congratulations and best wishes Laura!

New Laws Affect Foster Care

On July 27, 1981, in Hollywood, Florida, 6-year-old Adam Walsh was abducted at a mall. Two weeks later, some of Adam's remains were discovered in a canal more than 100 miles from his home. Since the abduction and murder of their son Adam, both John and Reve Walsh have dedicated themselves to protecting children from child predators, preventing attacks on our children, and bringing child predators to justice. Their commitment has saved the lives of numerous children. Congress, and the American people, honor John and Reve Walsh for their dedication to the well-being and safety of America's children.

The Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006.

Among other things, the new law: 1) amends the Title IV-E background check requirements; 2) makes information in the National Crime Information Databases (NCID) available to government agencies when investigating child abuse or neglect; 3) requires the Attorney General to conduct fingerprint-based checks of the NCID for child welfare agencies for certain purposes; and 4) requires the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to establish a national registry of substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect.

Criminal Background Checks

States must have procedures for conducting fingerprint-based checks of the NCID for all prospective foster and adoptive parents, as well as checking child abuse and neglect registry in each state the prospective foster and adoptive parents and any other adult(s) living in the home have resided in the preceding five years.

States must also have safeguards in place to: 1) prevent the unauthorized disclosure of information in any child abuse and neglect registry maintained by the State; 2) prohibit the State from sharing the information obtained from the registry pursuant to the foster and adoptive parent check requirement for any other purpose; and 3) comply with child abuse and neglect registry check requests made by other States.

Access to National Crime Information Databases

The Attorney General is now required to conduct fingerprint-based checks of the NCID for "child welfare agencies" pursuant to a request submitted for the purpose of: 1) an investigation relating to child abuse or neglect; and 2) a criminal background check. The Attorney General shall ensure access to the NCID by governmental social service agencies with child protection responsibilities, to be used by such agencies only in investigating or responding to reports of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation. However, access to the NCID will be limited to personnel who meet security and training standards established by the Attorney General.

National Child Abuse and Neglect Registry

This Act requires HHS to create an electronic national

registry of substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect. The national registry is to contain case-specific identifying information that is limited to the name of the perpetrator and the nature of the substantiated case of child abuse and neglect.

The Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act of 2006 was signed into law in July and became effective October 1, 2006. The Act will facilitate the adoption of children in foster care in the following ways:

- Adds new federal requirements relating to the placement of children in foster care across state lines, ensuring that receiving states complete required home studies of prospective adoptive families within 60 days of receiving the request from the state with responsibility for the child;
- Authorizes payment of incentives of \$1500 per interstate home study for home studies completed within 30 days;
- Requires more frequent visits by caseworkers to children placed outside the state with responsibility for the child (i.e., every 6 months rather than the current requirement of every 12 months).
- Requires case plans to include the most recent information available regarding the health and education records of the child. State, regional and national adoption exchanges and electronic exchange systems must be used for adoption and other permanency plan recruitment efforts.
- Requires the foster parent or foster care provider be provided a copy of the child's health and education records at the time of placement or under certain circumstances, that the required information be provided at the next available opportunity. Foster caregivers must be provided the "right" to be heard in "any proceeding," in lieu of the existing requirement for an opportunity to be heard in any review or hearing.
- Requires states to consider in-state and out-of-state placement options in permanency and concurrent planning.
- Requires states to provide foster youth aging out of the system with a copy of their health and education records at no cost to the youth.

Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act. The Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender Public Website shall include relevant information for each sex offender and other person listed on a jurisdiction's internet site. The website shall allow the public to obtain relevant information for each sex offender by a single query for any given zip code or geographical radius set by the user in a form and with such limitations as may be established by the Attorney General and shall have such other field search capabilities as the Attorney General may provide.

North Dakota Foster Care and Adoption Policy

On August 18, 2006, Manual Letter #3046 was issued that related to a change in policy regarding PRIDE training for foster parents. The new policy states "Every foster parent initially licensed after September 1, 2006, must take the PRIDE pre-service training prior to child placement and must complete the full PRIDE training course within the first year of licensure." The policy goes on to state that the Regional Supervisor may waive the requirement for the PRIDE pre-service training prior to child placement under certain circumstances.

After discussion within the Department, we have concluded that the regional supervisor may waive the pre-service requirement for all pre-adopt parents of infants being relinquished voluntarily to a private licensed child placement agency. This waiver applies to those limited circumstances where a prospective adoptive family is seeking foster care licensure only so that they may accept an infant into their home prior to termination of parental rights of the birth parents.

Should you have any questions about this matter, please feel free to contact me.

Julie Hoffman, Administrator
Adoption Services
ND Department of Human Services
701-328-4805

Foster Youth Internship Program

The Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI) started the Foster Youth Internship program in 2003 to raise awareness on Capitol Hill about the needs and unique perspectives of young adults in the United States aging out of foster care. Every year, Congressional Members partner with CCAI to "match" an eligible intern to an eight-week internship in their Washington, D.C. office. Every effort is made to place interns in the region of the country where they reside permanently. Interns are given a real-world experience in a Congressional office, complete with professional training, as well as a retreat coordinated by the CCAI.

Typical substantive duties of a Congressional Foster Youth Intern:

- Work directly with legislative correspondents and legislative assistants to research issues and compose correspondence.
- Attend committee hearings, sit in on meetings, attend press conferences, and take notes.
- Work on small legislative projects.
- Constituent services.

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l to r: Paul Ronningen, Kevin Stautz, Rep Earl Pomeroy, John Stautz, Paul Komrosky and Dawn Pearson.

(Photo submitted by Dawn Pearson)

National Convening on Youth Permanence

By John Stautz, Foster Youth, age 18

"When the city was built, it was built with the intention of intimidating foreign heads of state. Washington D.C. is the most powerful city on earth." How many of us have heard this line or a variation of it? It is true, walking around the city one can't help but feel impressed. There is a vast array of official buildings such as the Department of Labor, Department of Agriculture, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Pentagon, the Capitol Building, and of course, the White House. D.C. is also home to some of the nation's most recognizable monuments and memorials. For example, the Lincoln, Jefferson, and John F. Kennedy Memorials, Arlington Cemetery, and the Washington Monument are located either in or around the district. Washington D.C. has always been associated with the words power and politics, but *foster care*?

It only seems fitting that the 2006 National Convening on Youth Permanence be held in Washington D.C. The convention was held September 13th – 16th at the Renaissance Hotel and hosted by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Teams from states all across the country (39 total including North Dakota) came together to focus on what the foster care system can accomplish by working collaboratively to improve youth permanence. Youth permanence is establishing a permanent connection between a youth in care and a caring adult.

Your North Dakota Department of Human Services team was represented by Paul Ronningen (Director of the Children and Family Services Division), Tara Muhlhauser (Deputy Director and CPS Administrator, Children and Family Services), Dawn Pearson (State Independent

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Foster Youth Internship Program

Continued from page 4

- Attend and serve at Congressional briefings and meetings, including events organized by CCAI for the members of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption (Congress' Adoption Caucus).

Typical administrative duties of a Congressional Foster Youth Intern:

- Open, sort, and deliver incoming mail.
- Answer phones, greet constituents, run errands, deliver priority letters, and acquire Congressional signatures.
- Copying, filing, faxing, and data entry.

The eight-week internship is a full-time work experience. Interns are paid a stipend that will cover daily expenses. The CCAI FYI program pays major expenses such as housing and transportation to Washington, D.C. Interns must live in Washington, D.C. for the full duration of the program, including residing with the internship class at the provided Washington, D.C. university. For 2007, CCAI has increased the amount of internships available from 14 to 16 interns.

Deadlines for submission:

Postmarked by January 5, 2007

Notified by February 7, 2007

First day of internship May 23, 2007

Last day of internship July 21, 2007

Eligibility requirements:

All applicants must be enrolled in college and have completed 4 semesters by May 18, 2007. The applicant must have experience in U.S. foster care system at the time of their eighteenth birthday or be adopted after their fourteenth birthday from the U.S. foster care system. Good writing and research skills accompanied by an interest in the legislative process are required, and students in every degree program are encouraged to apply.

For more information, please contact Chelsea Buffington by email at Chelsea@ccainstitute.org or by phone at (703) 288-9700.

RESOURCES

The Original Foster Care Survival Guide

Written by Paul Knowlton, former foster youth from New Jersey turned Georgia attorney, The Original Foster Care Survival Guide provides the minimum, specific wisdom and knowledge the average foster teen needs in order to make a successful transition into an equally successful adulthood. The Guide is also targeted to foster parents, providers, and mentors that help youth prepare for their successful transition to adulthood. For more information visit www.sagesjournal.com.

National Convening on Your Permanence

Continued from page 4

Living Coordinator, Children and Family Services), Paul Komrosky (PATH foster parent), John Stautz (foster youth), and Kevin Stautz (foster youth). The team was sent to learn strategies for improving the state's approach to youth participation in Foster Care Programs and Youth Permanence. Tara and John also had the opportunity to give a brief presentation on the importance of youth permanence and North Dakota's progress so far. There were general assemblies to hear from several panels. There was a panel of youth speaking on youth permanence. These former foster youth shared their stories of struggle and triumph, leaving many watery eyes. A panel composed of members from the media spoke on improving the relationship between the media as a whole and the foster care community.

Thanks to Paul Ronningen, the state team was granted a meeting with North Dakota Congressman Earl Pomeroy in his D.C. office. (See photo) Pomeroy expressed his support for state programs, which are addressing the needs of youth in care. The congressman is a good-natured individual with a sense of humor. It was fun for me to talk with him because he is an alumni of the University of North Dakota where I am a current student. Someday I hope to be in a political office and so the sit-down was something I truly enjoyed.

Overall the convening was a great learning experience. The team was able to formulate a state plan for addressing youth participation as well as youth permanence. The collective brain storming of the conference helped to illuminate both our strengths and weaknesses as a state. The opportunity to talk to the other youth was especially beneficial to me because it helped me to gain information for starting a North Dakota State Youth Advisory Board. The board would be responsible for interacting with state systems as well as petitioning state and local legislatures. I believe by establishing this board, youth in our state will be able to shed a new light on the foster care system. I'm going to take this opportunity to yet again petition for what I would like to name the advisory board. ANDYI (Advocates for North Dakota Youth Influence) was my suggestion to Dawn Pearson. Hopefully, the board will be up and running in the near future.

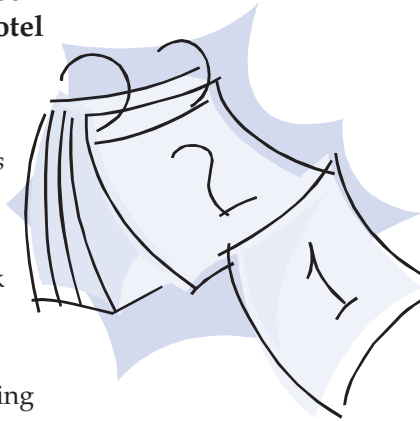
All there is left to do is take the information we learned at the conference and educate others. I believe our state will continue to serve youth in the best possible way it can. I appreciate this opportunity that was given to me and encourage other youth to become more involved in the care they are receiving. North Dakota has all the tools for success and the reinforcement of the 2006 National Convening on Youth Permanence will help put them to work.

Mark Your Calendar _____

National Foster Parent Association Conference
May 23 – May 27, 2007
Omni Shoreham Hotel
Washington, D.C.

*Minutes away from
many National treasures
such as...*

- The White House
- The Woodley Park National Zoo
- The Smithsonian
- The Capitol Building
- National Monuments
- Georgetown



www.NFPainc.org

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